

LAKE BELT MITIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Summary/Model Lands Meeting

South Florida Water Management District

Miami Service Center

Miami, FL

August 30, 2004 - 9:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order

- a) The meeting began at 9:05 AM.
- b) Opening Comments / Attendees
 1. Committee Members
 - a. Mike Spinelli, Alternate, Miami-Dade County DERM
 - b. Howard Hayes, DEP (by telephone)
 - c. Veronica Fasselt, U.S. E.P.A.
 - d. Jeff Rosenfeld, Alternate MF&L (Non-voting)
 2. Other meeting attendees
 - a. Beth McArdle, SFWMD
 - b. Allen Whitehouse, DEP
 - c. Ed Cronyn, SFWMD
 - d. Matt Davis, DERM
 - e. Tori White, USACE
 - f. Gwen Burzycki, DERM
 - g. Jim Goldasich, JIG&A

2. Introduction – Jeff Rosenfeld kicked off the meeting by providing some background information on the Lake Belt Committee’s consideration of alternative mitigation projects. One of the alternative projects suggested by the District was land acquisition/restoration in south Miami-Dade, particularly the Model Lands area. The subcommittee will hopefully be able to compile land acquisition/restoration costs and ecological lift information, which can be evaluated by the full Lake Belt Mitigation Committee to determine whether the Model Lands would be a viable alternative mitigation project. The Committee had expressed an interest in the potential of

determining average lift values for different portions of the Model Lands, so that each parcel purchased by the District would not need to be evaluated individually.

3. Matt Davis of Miami-Dade DERM provided background information on the Model Lands area. In order to avoid potential overlap with the CERP Biscayne Bay Wetlands project, Matt focused his discussion on a wetland area west of U.S. 1 that has been invaded by dense exotic vegetation (mostly Brazilian pepper and shoe pepper *Artesia*). The District and DERM have both had land acquisition programs in the area, but recently there have been a lack of willing sellers. DERM is currently obtaining new appraisals in the area, and anticipates higher valuations which may result in additional willing sellers. The initial appraisals (east of U.S. 1) are averaging approximately \$12,000/acre.

4. A discussion followed on the different types of mitigation that might be possible in the Model Lands area and the need to determine ecological lift for the different possibilities. In addition to the traditional acquisition/restoration scenario, some good quality areas might not require restoration (only acquisition) and some areas already under public ownership might require only restoration (not acquisition). It was discussed the different approaches should be evaluated, since acquisition was important because of development pressure in the area and the Committee had already approved “restoration-only” activities on publicly-owned land in the Pennsuco.

5. Lift Calculation Approach - Matt asked the group about the methodology of the approach – averaged out over areas or per parcel. The group agreed it should be averaged out over different areas. Matt Davis said it should be possible to define different levels of exotic infestation along the northern forested fringe of the wetlands. The only uncertainty at this point would be more clearly defining the transition in the forested fringe from very heavily exotic in the west to fairly native in the east by U.S. 1.

6. Tori White said that habitat types need to be identified, in order to take a look at what's currently there and determine the restoration goals. The group discussed use of the Uniform Wetland Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) and the Corps said they would probably also need to do a WRAP evaluation.
7. Discussion involved around the next meeting and proposed site visit. Beth McArdle suggested that the field trip should preferably be before the next Lake Belt Mitigation Committee meeting. The group discussed that water levels are generally lower after mid October, when the canal levels are lowered. Tori said having the tour before next Lake Belt meeting would be better than waiting for lower water levels. The group decided to schedule the field trip on October 15th in order to start the wetland evaluations.
8. a). Motion passed unanimously. It was proposed to meet at the Homestead Field Station at 9:00 AM.
9. Ed Cronyn handed out Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method evaluation forms and suggested that the background information be filled out before the site visits. DERM agreed to fill out the background information on the UMAM forms. DERM will also take a first shot at developing different vegetation polygons for the area. Gwen recommended that we have a plan ahead of time of what sites will be visited by personnel doing the actual scoring. DERM and the District will develop a proposed list of sites for the October 15th meeting.
10. **ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:45

11. ACTION ITEMS

Action Item #1 – Beth will send Notice and schedule the Subcommittee to meet at October 15th at the Homestead Field Station.

Action Item #2 – Ed Cronyn will look into helicopter availability for the tour.

Action Item #3 – DERM agreed to fill out the background information on the UMAM forms. DERM will also take a first shot at developing different vegetation polygons for the area.

Action Item #4 – DERM and the District will develop a proposed list of sites for the October 15th meeting.